

Two honored with MLK award

by Rachel Newton

The Pine Bluff Arsenal Martin Luther King, Jr. Achievement Awards were presented to Will Smith and Jerry Mack during the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial ceremony Jan. 13 at Creasy Auditorium.

Before the recipients were announced Col. Tom Woloszyn, arsenal commander, went over some of the criteria for the award.

"I'm challenging you when we leave here to take a look at the workforce," said Woloszyn. "Dig a little deeper and next year we will have more great nominees to honor."

The award was first presented in 1987, said Woloszyn. "The purpose of the award is to recognize an employee who supports the qualities, ideals, principles, accomplishments, achievements and contributions reflective of Dr. Martin Luther King," he said.

Other award criteria highlights are that the individual must encourage minority group employees and women with demonstrated potential to apply for jobs with low representation of that group. They must participate in programs within the installation and the community emphasizing training and education to enhance career, education and community development in order to improve the overall quality of life regardless of race, color, creed or national origin. And lastly, the award recipient must demonstrate contributions to equal rights principles by assisting those within and outside federal service to achieve their highest potential and productivity.

Mack, who is a toxic material handler supervisor within the Pine Bluff Chemical Activity, said that the MLK award means a lot to him. "Out of all my achievements, this is at the top," he said, "because of the man and what he stood for. I think I'm doing that work. I don't do things for people to recognize me."

For over 23 years, Mack has worked as a football, basketball and softball with youth in the community. He was named coach of the year in 2004. He also works very closely with his church. "This award makes me want to push further," he said. "It was a very special moment for me. When you work in the community you get tired sometimes, you have to love it and I have good help."

Working within the Military Personnel and Community Activity Directorate, Smith develops marketing programs for MWR (Morale Welfare and Recreation). According to his award nominee information, Smith started his federal career in youth services where he worked for 10 years as a counselor and mentor to teenagers. "He served as a role model as he taught sportsmanship, equal opportunity, teamwork, and how, with the proper attitude and determination, you could be whatever you wanted to be in life," stated the nomination information.

"Any comparison to the late, great Dr. Martin Luther King is definitely something I will cherish forever," said Smith. "I was happy and excited to receive the award. It was a pleasure to co-receive it with Jerry because he is a great guy. It was a nice thing for two people to receive the award."